



CASA in Action

NEWSLETTER

LET THEM PLAY

For thousands of underprivileged children in India, access to quality education, healthcare and nutrition is a far-fetched reality. But these special children deserve the right to enjoy a playful childhood and not work in harmful conditions. All they need is just a support.

Follow us on



@CASAIndiaofficialpage



@CASA_India

You  **Tube** CASA India

Letters from Readers

Let me cordially congratulate you for bringing July-September issue of 'CASA in Action Newsletter' on a very powerful theme 'Women of change'. The cover page pictures and graphic design of the newsletter were very impressive. I was quite moved to go through the stories of Sushma, Santabai, Subhadrabai, Sujatabai, and Shivkumari. I appreciate hard work of the reporters.

For next issue of the newsletter, I look forward to read such cases with little more critical perspective as why particular communities (women, men and children from socially excluded groups) experience violence and deprivation despite progressive laws and policies, huge administrative/institutional set up and good government budget. It will be great to learn as how related laws, policies, institutions and budgetary allocations are not sufficient to protect and promote these communities. Further, how civil society/CBOs or CASA were able to work differently to protect and promote these communities in project areas.

Further, as the news letter was highlighting women of change, it would have been good to see few pictures and some data on women under 'Work for all' story on pg6-7. Once again I appreciate great work and eagerly wait for the next edition of the newsletter.

Deepak Singh
Humanitarian and Policy Consultant

The volume 22 convey that CASA's achievements were obtained in a scientifically manner. After reading all the news, I personally feel that it's like a mirror for CASA's success, especially the communication team for their participatory approach for collecting the reports from different fields within short time.

Francis Joseph
Project Officer

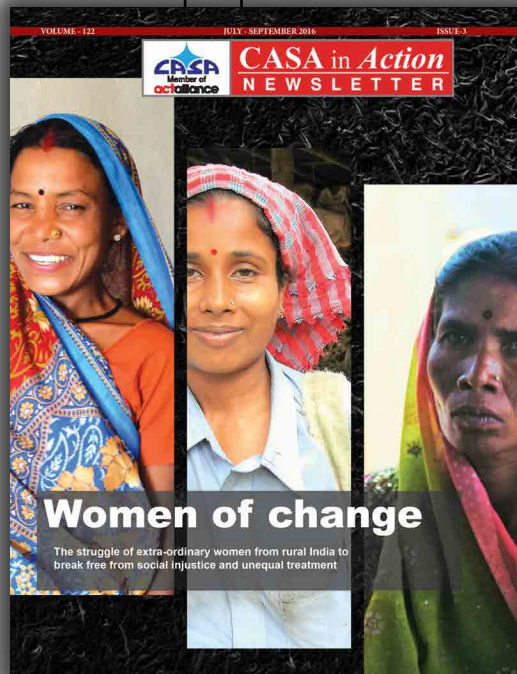
I had been to various tea gardens of Assam, West Bengal and other states during my childhood days and was very much enthralled to see the garden estate and women workers holding their children in their baskets. Going through the cover story of 'Tea garden workers' in April - June 2016 Newsletter and I felt very sorry to know the closure of many such gardens adversely effecting the livelihood sources of many workers resulting into severe malnutrition and Tb like deceases to their children. This publication has brought in notice many such issues which if addressed timely by the relevant appropriate institutions whether Government or Private, may again bring happiness over the faces of garden workers. Such publications help all the stakeholders to learn about many hidden pertinent issues which one cannot know unless until has visited the community

concerned. Thanks for sharing with us the in-depth insight into the hardships and agonies of Tea Garden Workers they are presently going through, which in turn motivate many like me, to work their best possible to bring back happiness on the faces of Tea Garden Workers and their families.

Pankaj Kumar
Assistant Project Officer

I want to congratulate the team wonderful issue of CASA IN ACTION. The recent one with the theme 'Women of Change' is so inspiring and outstanding.

Preethi Evageline
CASA South Zone



The cover story of this newsletter is very relevant. The efforts to bring women transformation stories is really appreciable. Hope, this kind of documentation will continue in future.

Aradhana Rai
Woman activist

**GET ACCESS TO CASA NEWSLETTERS.
 DOWNLOAD OUR LATEST ISSUES FROM
WWW.CASA-INDIA.ORG**



CASA Director & Consulting Editor

Dr. Sushant Agrawal

Program Head & Dept Editor

Dr. Jayant Kumar

Emergency Head & Dept Editor

Mr. Nirmal Singh

Graphics & Design

Sanjeev Singh

Reporters

Ishan Bharthi

Isha Banerjee

Deepak Singh

Cover Story Assistance

K.V. Thomas

Poul Luther

Karunakaran Durai

Varakumar

Pankaj Kumar

Shiv Prasad Naidu

Kamal Kumar

Dinesh Vyas

South Zone Team

East Zone Team

Photographs & Edits

Isha Banerjee

Sanjeev Singh

CASA is registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, and with the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India under the Foreign Contributions Regulation act. Donations to Church's auxiliary for social action are exempted from Income Tax under Section 80-G.

Printed & Published by:

 **CASA** Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
Member of
actalliance

Rachna Building, 2 Rajendra Place, Pusa Road, New Delhi - 110008
Ph: +91-11-25730611, 25730612, 25731218, 25731219, 25761579, 25767231
Fax: +91-11-25752502
E-mail: casa@del6.vsnl.net.in Website: www.casa-india.org

CASA in Action

Volume - 123, Issue - 4

Copyright CASA-India.

*All rights are reserved throughout the world.
Reproduction in whole or in parts without
permission is prohibited.*

Editorial

In April 2010, India enforced the Fundamental right to free and compulsory education through a landmark law, more commonly known as the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

But considering India's vastness and rapid population growth, the vision to provide basic education along with ensuring healthcare and nutrition could not reach those thousands of underprivileged children who have already lost a part of their childhood to overcome social and financial burdens.

In the ever-shifting blame game on who is responsible for the increasing child labours in the country, the children engaged in all forms of labours continue to get absorbed in the quagmire of family's economic dependency – that by the time system realises the need to rescue them, these children have already become part of the labour workforce.

A family's economic burden does not necessarily affect only the parents – it also suffocates child's innocence as at an early age they are exposed to world's most harsh realities. Children work in the dingiest places to the most hazardous industries, from being habitual of working in the suffocating factories to slogging in the peak noon hours.

Despite a slight drop in the number of child labours in India, the stats on child labour is a reflection of the wide social gap that has been lingering in our system.

This edition LET THEM PLAY takes you through the journey of those kids and youths who have roughened their palms in supporting their families at the expense of their education. From being over-exploited by the employers to facing abuses at work, these children have experienced the terrible realities at a nascent age.

Apart from migrating from their home, they face challenges like child marriage, early-age pregnancy, hunger and malnutrition. As a result of these structural deficiencies, these children become an instrument of exploitation and by the time they are adults they are left with no or little opportunities for living a life with dignity. The economic condition of family forces a child to discontinue her/his education and is pushed into the vicious cycle of unskilled labour.

Just like the aspirations of an urban child, the underprivileged children also have dreams in their eyes and the zeal to fulfil them. All they need is a support system using which they can pursue education and achieve their dreams again. Take nutrition meals every day. Learn skills which can fetch them respectable jobs or become entrepreneurs. Live a dignified life. Contribute in nation building.



**We would
love to
hear your views**

write to us at:
ishan@casa-india.org
isha@casa-india.org
sanjeev@casa-india.org

contents

COVER STORY



12 LET THEM PLAY

19

**CHILD LABOUR
FREE ZONES -
A CASA
INITIATIVE**

24 **RESTORED
CHILDHOOD**





8

**CASA AT UN CLIMATE
SUMMIT COP22**

17

**THE
CHILDREN
OF IRULA**

34

**CATCH THE
TOP NEWS**



26

**Living on the Edge
CHILDREN OF
TEA GARDENS
OF BENGAL**

Climate emergency: COP22 and Civil Society Expectations



Today the world already faces the beginnings of the worst impacts of climate change. A large number of poor and marginalised communities in developing countries face severe consequences due to increasing incidences of extreme weather events, sea level

rise and unusual temperature variations.

Among the 13 deadliest floods faced across the globe in last five years, six were recorded in South Asia alone[1]. Small island countries such as Tuvalu are facing a crisis of their very existence due to rising sea levels. Unusual rising temperatures in various regions have not only disrupted the lives of people, but also severely impacted the flora and fauna of our living planet.

Within the series of COP processes, COP21 in Paris last year was a landmark event during which an ambitious agreement came into existence to address climate change. COP22, therefore, is a crucial COP during which further modalities of operation will be decided. We are at such a critical point in time to adequately address climate change that countries must now take immediate actions to raise their pre-and post-2020 ambition levels if we are to remain below the global average temperature of 2 degree. Therefore, we are expecting a greater focus on renewable and energy efficiency measures from this meeting, which may set us on a path towards zero carbon development by 2050.

Clear guidance is also expected on the scaling up of finance for adaptation by 2020, as well as a well-defined role of the Adaption Fund referred to in the Paris Agreement. Loss and damage is rightly reflected as a separate focus within the Agreement, and it is expected that within the next year it should be adequately addressed under the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) and its Executive Committee (ExCom).

The world needs a successful COP22, in which agreements made in Morocco lead to better safeguards for the most poor and marginalised people across the globe struggling to adapt to the climate change emergency today. We hope world leaders come to this stage with a positive mindset and commitment to resolving each and every hurdle towards an adequate and ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement.



Dinesh Vyas. Working as a Development Professional with CASA India since 1999 on issues related to Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of poor and marginalized communities in India.

Source: ACT Alliance

Gender Just Climate Action



As we gather in Marrakech for COP22, let us remember the innumerable women who are climate refugees or displaced, and the women who have lost their livelihoods and lives due to climate change. Gender justice is central to climate justice and women's leadership is central and crucial to climate justice as they are more vulnerable and affected, but they are least involved in deciding the future of the globe. We call the leaders of every country to include women in every step of this urgent work.

The mandate of action plan on gender created at the COP in Lima has been extended. This calls for mainstreaming gender and human rights in all of the processes. Therefore, let us lobby for the appointment of national gender focal points. Let us also work on nationally defined contributions (NDCs) to ensure they include gender and human rights as the NDCs of only 62 countries do not reflect this position.

Let us not see women as only a vulnerable group but also as key partners in our endeavours to confront climate change. We need to advocate to override gender based injustice reinforced by cultural practices at all levels – grassroot to international level. Let the climate justice issue not be confined to the negotiation tables as only a technical issue beyond the knowledge of the grassroot women. It is important to ensure that the legal document reflects the everyday experience of those suffering the impacts of climate change.



Joycia Thorat works for Church's Auxiliary for social Action in India

Source: ACT Alliance

#CASA@COP22

CASA actively participated in the COP22 held in Marrakech, Morocco. Joycia Thorat and Dinesh Vyas were part of the ACT Delegation.

Dinesh represented CASA and was also the Co-Chair of Climate Change Group (CCG-Act Alliance). Joycia Thorat represented Advisory Group of Advocacy Group of Act Alliance as its Co-chair (AGA – Act Alliance).

Green Zone also displayed variety of alternative sustainable models from civil society and corporate to reduce emission. Dinesh Vyas chaired these meetings.

COP 22 was an important COP as the Paris Agreement (PA) was ratified by around 100 countries just before the COP22 and came into force on 4th Nov. 2016. As the result of this CMA came into existence and its first session as CMA1 was organized along with the Advanced Platform on Paris Agreement (APA) that was already in existence after the PA signed last year. Though CMA will be able to replace APA after all the parties ratify to PA who signed this agreement.

The Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across the globe expected a lot from this COP and were waiting for some good decision on taking forward the PA when parties have agreed already to keep below the global average temperature below 1.5 degree C by 2050.

The CSO groups were expecting that Pre-2020 ambitions will be also raised up and developed countries will re-affirm their commitments along with showing a clearer path towards implementation of their INDCs. All were expecting that Facilitative Dialogue 2016, Decisions in APA and other Subsidiary Bodies like SBI and SBSTA will work towards a roadmap for better implementation of PA as well as rising up pre-2020 ambitions.

Various Bilateral meetings were done with EU, Germany, Faro Iceland, Denmark and many other developing countries as well. Thematic groups on Low Carbon, Resilience, Finance and Gender followed the Facilitative Dialogue 2016, Multilateral Assessment and APA along with various side events. As it was pre-decided that this COP will only come up with some framework, guidelines and rules to carry forward the PA, in the end decisions also reflected the same gestures.

The momentum on Rule Book for the Paris agreement was taken forward and agreed that this will be finalized till 2018. The issue of Loss & Damage got some momentum under the discussions where 5 year rolling plan for EX-Comm. of the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) was agreed along with a periodic review of WIM.

The presidencies of COP22 and COP23 will organize regular dialogues on this issue and will report back to COP23. SBI and SBSTA both also agreed on full operationalization of Paris Committee on Capacity Building which will start work in 2017.

Transparency System will be further strengthened in the form of multilateral assessment and facilitative dialogue along with accounting modalities of Public Finance.

Announcement of 81 million USD for 2016 was a crucial step but it will not be able to close the finance gap and it is not equally a fair treatment towards pre-2020 as well as post 2020 ambition and action.

Where developed countries disappointed this time, commitment of 48 countries of Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) towards 100% renewable has shown a path towards 1.5 degree C was a remarkable gesture and showing a way to developing countries that it could be possible.

Finally, COP22 has pushed forward a framework towards the better implementation of PA but it will take another two years at least towards the clear role and responsibility for post-2020 climate regime, where larger responsibility will be again on developed countries but if hangover of pre-2020 commitments is not resolved timely then it will again delay the larger emission reduction goals towards 1.5 degree. ■



Haripur Amra Sabai Unnayan Samiti (HASUS), is one of the Partner Organizations of CFC West Bengal Package, a Government registered Welfare Organization working for the welfare of marginalized people of our society with specific focus on Child Protection, Anti Human Trafficking, Adolescent health, Livelihood Development and disaster risk mitigation since the year: 1988.

Presently the Organization is implementing projects in North & South 24 Parganas, Purulia and Murshidabad District of West Bengal. Overall Vision of the organization is to create a Self reliant society based on peace, love as justice respects the human dignity as natural environment.

One of the major focus areas of HASUS is providing Institution and Non Institution services to the Children, Need Care and Protection and women in difficult circumstance through running 06 different types residential shelter homes followed by formation and strengthen protection mechanism, skill development training activities, livelihood linkages to ensure proper restoration and socio-economic sustainability.

A rally including children, community people and government stakeholders was covered with posters/plackers conveying messages on child rights, Anti Human Trafficking & health hygiene issues, moved from Lakshmikantapur to surrounding villages as well as covering the Railway Station.



Inputs by
CASA East Zone Team
Nandita Goswami
Debojyoti Chakraborty
Aloke Kumar Ghosh

Rural Aid, CASA's Partner in West Bengal, brought forward awareness on issues related to child protection and right to education at fair in Alipurduar district.

'SABALA MELA' was organised by Government of West Bengal (District Fair) between 14th to 18th November 2016. District Magistrate invited the local NGOs, CBOs & SHGs of Kalchini block for putting up their stalls on social issues the organization deals with.

District Magistrate of Alipurduar came forward to address the issue of Child Rights and awareness on unsafe migration and trafficking through mass awareness.

Alipurduar is the bordering district of West Bengal which shares International border with Bhutan and

Assam. Tea – Timber and Tourism are the main economic resource. Among the other issues in the region one of the most heinous crime is human trafficking and the worst sufferers are children and women.

Children are in very vulnerable situation in these bordering districts in terms of climate change related hazards, susceptible to disaster, lack of education or discontinuation of schooling, unsafe migration and trafficking.

These all are because of its vulnerable geographical location. Kalchini is the one of the vulnerable block within the Alipurduar district where CFC Partner Organization with support from CASA addressing the issues related with "Women and Child Rights".



The launching programme on Mass Drug Administration (MDA) was observed on 10th of August 2016 in Berhampur, Ganjam district of Odisha. CASA and the Health Department of Govt. Berhampur jointly organised the MDA 2016 programme.

The programme was inaugurated by Hon'ble MLA Ramesh Chyau Patnaik. All the delegates sharing the dais consumed the DEC and albendazole tablets in front of everyone to set up an example to others that timely consumption of medicine can help in Filariasis free society.

The team members of CASA installed one IEC stall where all kind of information related to the Filriasis and its precautionary measures, doses about taking the DEC medicines etc. mentioned very clearly. Patnaik watched the demo very closely and handed over the Home Based Footcare Management (HBFM) kits to the patients.

CASA urged Principal Secretary, Department of Disaster Management that there is a need to upgrade the existing professional skills of Disaster Management Officials. CASA shared the recent learning of post flood situation of Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar Districts where there is a need of "Post Disaster Damage and Need Assessment (PDNA)".

CASA also shared that it was the only organisation in the state which has the experience (theoretical and practical) on PDNA.

It was decided that in phase manner, CASA Personnel will train Disaster Management Officials (District Disaster Management Officers, Sub-Divisional Disaster Management Officers, Block Disaster Management Officers) at Administrative Training Institute.

As of now, we have trained 66 Disaster Management Officials who would be given responsibility to conduct PDNA at their respective Districts & Blocks and CASA State Secretariat members will visit and review the same.

Aloke Kumar Ghosh, CASA Additional Emergency Officer, and Debojyoti Chakraborty, CASA Asst Project Officer of CASA have been imparting the skill trainings as well as the "Inter Agency Group of West Bengal" on request of the Department of Disaster Management of Government of West Bengal.

Both have been trained on this subject at Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC), Bangkok, Thailand. Ghosh is the present Convener of IAG-West Bengal and Chakraborty manages the secretariat.



Cover Story



LET THEM PL

For thousands of underprivileged children in India, access to quality education, healthcare and nutrition is a far-fetched reality. But these special children deserve the right to enjoy a playful childhood and not work in harmful conditions. All they need is just a support.



Writes
Isha Banerjee

CASA Communications

At 36 degrees Celsius heat, Rajeswari takes several rounds of one acre cotton field. Her job is to find purple cotton flower buds to pollinate them with the white ones to yield raw bales, for which she is paid Rs 120 a day.

Even though she isn't regular at the work now-a-days, she is well aware of the core methodology on how to yield more production.

15-year-old Rajeswari is just filling-in the shift of her mother, On ordinary days she studies at CASA Bridge Course Centre where school drop-outs are given another chance to catch-up with their education.

For the shift, she left home at 06.00 in the morning only to reach the field by 09.00. "Otherwise there is a chance to get late for work for which they might cut a little portion of the wage," she says.

Rajeswari, a resident of Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh, gets ready for her day's work as instructed by her mother. Work on the cotton fields is not new to her.

She drapes all the rubber clothing gears and plastic sheets on her body to save herself from cuts in the fields.

"I come here whenever my mother is not able to make it to the field; or when she goes to other villages to earn additional income. But I know this work because I had worked in other cotton fields when my family's economic conditions were not good. I left school due to this," she said.

In between their shifts, the workers are allowed to take break only once at 1 PM. But Rajeswari, being one of the youngest workers in the field, feels giddiness due to the heat.

She says her "body aches" as she is "not able to match the efficiency with that of the other women working in the cotton field."

Andhra Pradesh is one of the 5 top cotton producing states of India. The temperature in the state, including its neighbouring states like Maharashtra and Telangana, are just suitable for cotton production as the crop requires a uniformly high temperature varying between 21°C and 30°C for its growth.

Forced and child labour is very common in the cotton industry. Sometimes rural poverty means children must work long hours to support their families. Forced to work long hours, often without food; they suffer from hunger, exhaustion and heatstroke as many a times they are forced to

AY

Design & layout by **Sanjeev Singh**





47% children
drop-out from school
between class 1 to 10



About 27%
of children between
age 7-15 are illiterates

43 lakh children
aged 5-14 years in India are
engaged in labour work



Only 48% girls
are enrolled in schools
at primary level (I-V)

Sources: MHRD Educational Statistics 2014 | MHRD Statistics of School Education 2011-12

states, children become the easy targets of additional incomes by their families to support them in their off-seasonal incomes.

Nevertheless, Rajeswari was liberated from the webs of child labourers a few months back. Now, she will appear for her Class-10 examination for which she attends coaching class every Sunday.

“I could not study because of my family’s circumstances. But I always wanted to be a doctor. I know there are lot of children like me who are in need of education and healthcare. I want to be a health servant and serve them,” she said with a smile.

While the state-run schools provide the textbooks and question banks to the board aspirants, CASA pays the examination fee alongwith notebooks and other requirements to study better.

Rajeswari’s close friend Shyamla has acquired many health problems when she used to work in the cotton pollination business.

Both friends are preparing for their 10th examination with full vigour. “Previously, we used to come for work in the fields together,” Shyamla says.

She is not employed in the cotton work anymore. But there was a time when Shyamla would come home with hands bearing scratches along with pain in the lower leg portion.

“Work for children in these fields is hard. We have to toil the entire field and constantly stand and bend during the pollination process,” she says.

Unlike adults working in the cotton pollination fields, the employers hire more children are they are

able to locate the flower buds situation even in the lower portions of the 3-feet plants.

In the cotton industry, children are employed to transfer pollen from one plant to another. They are subjected to long working hours, exposure to pesticides and they are often paid below the minimum wage.

Shyamla says she gets pain in her hips while standing and bending during the pollination.

They drink whatever water is available here, most of the times borewell water.

The spraying of cotton crops with toxic pesticides is incredibly common in most cotton producing countries. Child labourers may spray toxic pesticides or work in cotton fields during and after spraying has occurred. Many of the chemicals children are exposed to are dangerous nerve agents, designed to impede the nervous system in pests.



**work
Long
hours often
without food.**

Children as young as five years old can be recruited and sometimes forced to work in cotton fields and related factories (where raw cotton is processed) for very little or no pay. This happens at the expense of their education.

Child Rights NGO M.V. Foundation has found that ‘nearly 400,000 children, mostly girls between seven and 14 years of age, toiling for 14-16 hours a day in cottonseed production across the country of which 90% are employed in Andhra Pradesh.’

It is observed that the cotton picking have its bearing on the attendance of children in the rural schools.

Migration leading to non-availability of workers and cheap labour has forced children in the state to become a major workforce in cotton and chilly picking. While their parents are migrating to different fields in other districts or nearby



A young cotton field worker in Andhra Pradesh

In India, there are many Laws enacted to protect the rights of children:

- *The Child Labour Act, 1986.*
- *The Factories Act, 1948*
- *The Mines Act, 1952*
- *The Bonded Labour System Abolition Act*

Constitutional provisions for children:

- *Article 15 (3): empowers the State to make special legal provision for children. It makes mandate to the government to ensure children's welfare constitutionally.*

- *Article 23: puts total ban on forced labour & is punishable under the Act.*
- *Article 24: prohibits employment of children in hazardous factories below the age of 14yrs.; e.g.: mine, match industries etc.*
- *Article 21, 45 gives the right to education to all the children below the age of 14 years.*
- *Article 39 declares the duty of the State to provide the children a free and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. and others....*

They can affect children causing tremors, nausea, weakness, and in serious cases paralysis and death.

Studies also show that children who spray pesticides in cotton fields experience blurred vision, extreme dizziness, headaches, difficulty in concentration, trouble remembering, and difficulty in understanding, feeling depressed and numbness.

This 16-year-old girl dropped out of school when her family's condition started to become less conducive for her education. Shyamla's parents had to support a family of three girl children with their minimal wages.

For her the joy of attending classes at CASA Bridge Schools has a different meaning altogether.

"Now we know that there are privileges for us like free food, free education."

Without schools, the regular food would not be a constant thing at her home. "After joining bridge course, we are regularly taking food and will appear for 10th exam in a few months.

She understands a bit of English and replies "thank you" when the interview is over.

School – Miles away

Child labour in domestic work has been strictly banned by the Government, because of the increased cases of child abuse and sexual abuse of children especially girl child.

Despite ban, there are several small-scale

industries which employ children on large scale.

In this remote Mangapeta village of Andhra, more girls are seen in the three-month-old CASA Bridge Course Centre. The local leaders say that more boys are able to join above 5th-standard state government schools whereas there are only a handful of girls who could actually continue to further after 5th class.

Reason – Transport facilities. One bus passes through the village during morning and evening hours and that is their only hope for commutation.

Bus and bicycles are the only two modes of transport using which the children can reach their school.

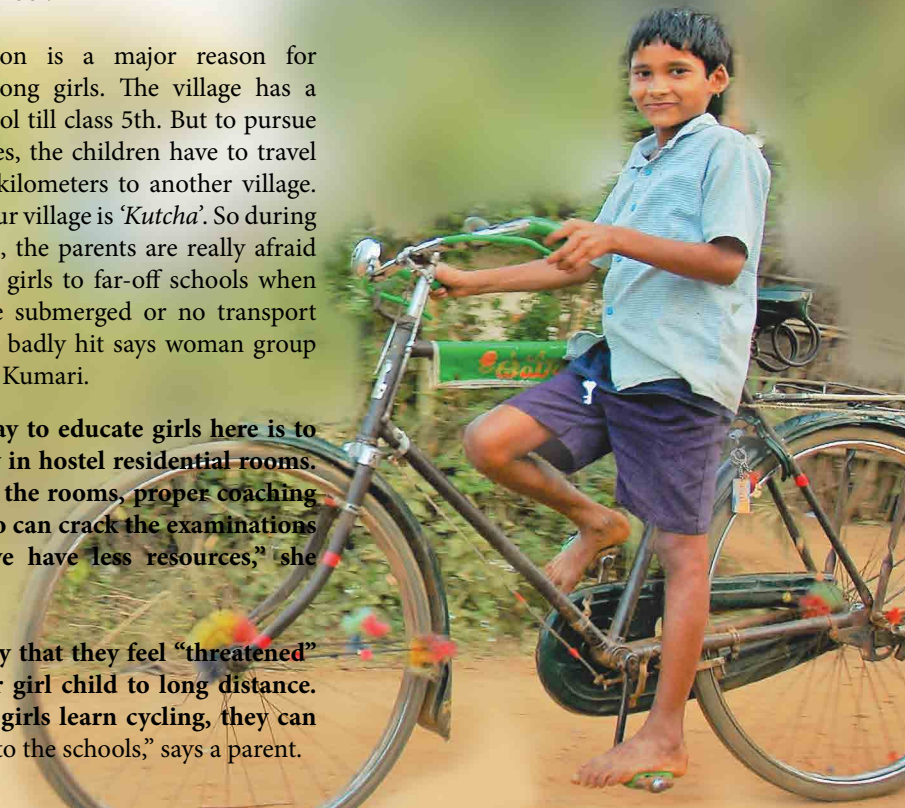
"Transportation is a major reason for dropouts among girls. The village has a primary school till class 5th. But to pursue further studies, the children have to travel to at least 5 kilometers to another village. The road to our village is 'Kutchu'. So during rainy seasons, the parents are really afraid to send their girls to far-off schools when the roads are submerged or no transport facilities," are badly hit says woman group leader Radha Kumari.

"The only way to educate girls here is to let them stay in hostel residential rooms. But to claim the rooms, proper coaching is required to can crack the examinations for which we have less resources," she adds.

The locals say that they feel "threatened" to send their girl child to long distance. "Only if the girls learn cycling, they can go in groups to the schools," says a parent.

"Because of the family burden and failure to get into schools, the children are going with the family for labour. Many children are even skipping the bridge centre and skipping education in the process," says Kumari, whose daughter is a student at CASA BCC.

Another Sangam leader Satyanarayan talks about the transport issue: "Boys are going to schools by bicycles. Parents are not comfortable in sending their daughters so away from their houses. The girls have to cover a distance of around 6 kms to schools as there are no buses or autos which they don't find it safe." ■





Who are the bonded child labours?

Bonded child labour occurs when children work to repay a debt which may have been incurred by a parent or guardian. This is particularly common in the Indian cotton industry.

Parents from impoverished villages, driven by necessity, receive advances or loans from field/factory/land owners in exchange for their child's labour for a particular duration; this debt is then used as a method of binding child workers and removing their freedom. Sometimes the debt is passed down through generations, inherited from grandparents and forcing entire families into servitude and poverty.

What time you reached your work place?

"They gave me a cellphone from which they used to call me every day at 5 AM so that I do not miss or skip my work."

"They" for the 13-year-old Dinesh (name changed) are his landlords from whom his parents had taken Rs 7,000 advance during financial burden in the family; in return of which a member of his family will have to work at the money lender's house for a whole year to repay the debt.

Dinesh started to work at the age of 11 years as his mother went on to find additional income to support his family. He was the only one who could cover his mother's shift at the landlord's house.

"I had to reach their house by 5 AM. They gave me a mobile phone and I used to set an alarm. There was no prepaid balance in my sim card. So only the lenders could call me up in the morning to wake me up and instructed me to not be late," the minor said.

So what all work you did at their house?

"My landlord had huge stable which had nearly 15-17 buffalos. I used to take out the buffalos from the hut and tied them somewhere. Afterwards, I used to clean the

dung and urine. Basically, I had to clean the entire stable. My work hours were from 5 AM to 6-7 PM.

"There were other children in the house of my age. Sometimes they made fun of me. I never reacted, but sometimes I used to get really angry."

When did you break for meals?

"My mother used to give me some breakfast in the early morning. But other days, I could not eat food as I always used to be in hurry to reach my workplace. The landlord scolded me whenever I reached late. They deduct our daily wage.

"They use to give tea around 6.30 AM. The tumbler is not from the kitchen. It is kept in some other place, outside kitchen. They pour the tea from the kitchen window into that tumbler without touching the tumbler. I am not allowed to enter the house premises."

Did you ever get angry at their behaviour?

"Angry? Of course yes. Whenever I became tired and worn-out during work hours, the landlords abused me, used bad words. Even the women in the house spoke to me with the same language.

"When I am not able to perfectly clean the dung, then they scold me. Although they have never assaulted me at any moment, they only use the bad words.

"Most of the time, hearing that language, I get angry on them and want to beat them back or abuse them. But if I do so, they will stop supporting our family"

Dinesh was motivated to join CASA Bridge Course Centre but due to the nature of his work he skipped the school every next day.

Just recently, CASA volunteers negotiated with his landlords to allow him to go to school and free him of all bonds. His mother requested the lenders to allow him to attend school.

Even though he attends his classes regularly now, Dinesh says that "he goes for work on Sundays" as he wants his mother to take a day's break for herself.

Nevertheless, the 13-year-old boy has pledged that he will "never" work as a full time worker. "Even if I work as a labourer, I will work as a daily labourer not as a bonded labourer." ■

Over 1.5 lakh children in the age group 5-14 years in Tamil Nadu (2011 Census data reveals) are still labouring under the sun and in dingy factories, every day.

Child labour continues to exist in textile industries, agricultural fields during cotton plucking, brick kilns, beedi-making units, tamarind beating and matchstick factories in Tamil Nadu.

Among them are the children from the 'Irula' tribal community, one of the largest tribal communities in the southern states of India and particularly prominent in Tamil Nadu. The Irulas have been driven out of the forests which was once their original habitats.

At present, there are only 23,116 Irular households in Tamil Nadu (according to Census 2011). Irular is mainly concentrated in north-eastern part of Tamil Nadu – Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Thiruvannamalai, Thiruvallur, Villupuram, Salem and Dharmapuri districts with a few Irular households found in the western ghats of Nilgiri hills.

Popularly known for their “snake catching” skills and as “excellent forest guides”, the children from the community picked up the art forms from their fathers and forefathers and made a living out of it.

But today, with the dying art forms, they have adapted to newer livelihood options like wood-cutting, unskilled agricultural labour, sugar cane cutting and carrying sugarcane from field to main-land, manual scavenging in marriage halls and small towns and minor construction work.

Although the children from this community no longer practice the skills of snake catching, a very few make conscious choice of going to schools. When interviewed, some of the present generation of children from this community claimed that they had never seen a school before.

The children of Irula



This ethnic group did not have any idea of a job card to enrol them under MGNREGA or perhaps a voters-ID card. They were not aware of the government entitlements. They lived in damaged huts - not having the land entitlements or house pattas.

As a result, illiteracy, social-exclusion from the nearby villages, child marriage, poor maternal and child mortality rate and malnutrition among children were some of the social evils were continued to be practiced.

Since 2008, CASA has been the instrumental in mobilizing and facilitating the Block level federation for the socially-excluded community in Uthukadu and Eachampatty regions of Tamil Nadu where Irulas are residing at 11 villages.

District level federations were formed to facilitate a network with State Level Federation of Irulas, who used to live in the outskirts of the village - particularly in Lake Poramboke waste land or Pond poramboke area - not having proper linkage or access with the remaining communities of the village as they are considered as excluded.

In some pockets they still live in precarious conditions with no permanent employment. They depend on daily wages from agriculture, cleaning the bushes, wage labor in coal making and some are making money from collecting snakes and rats from the fields. As they manage their life with the meagre income, they are unaware of government's welfare schemes.

Empowering the Irulas collectively and individually through awareness programmes and capacity building programmes on Rights and Entitlements and oppressions meted out on them was one of the toughest tasks undertaken by CASA.

The organisation facilitated them to participate in Grama Sabha meetings and motivated them to hold regular meetings at block level and seek to redress their problems.



Author Edgar Thurston researched extensively on the Irula Tribe of southern India in his book Project Gutenberg's Castes and Tribes of Southern India.

The impact is visible. Children, who were enrolled at CASA Bridge Course Centres, are now attending regular schools. The parents have now started enrolling their children right from the primary standards.

Irulas have set up their own organisational units at Block level and acquired the skills needed to manage them. They are attending Grama Sabha meetings and raising demands to address issues related to shelter, education and livelihood activities.

But a lot needs to be done as they continue to remain the victims of social and economic exclusion. ■

Irula family in Tamil Nadu



calendar 2017



calendar 2017

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

26th January - Republic Day
 24th February - Maha Shivratri
 13th March - Holi
 4th April - Ram Navami
 9th April - Mahavir Jayanti

14th April - Good Friday
 10th May - Buddha Purnima
 26th June - Eid-ul-Fitr
 15th August - Independence Day
 2nd September - Bakr Eid

30th September - Dussehra
 1st October - Muharram
 2nd October - Gandhi Jayanti
 19th October - Diwali
 4th November - Guru Nanak Jayanti
 25th December - Christmas





Children of Bridge Course Centre in Mangapeta village in Andhra Pradesh

CASA took up Child Labour Free Zone Project (CLFZP) initiative to create an environment and opportunity for children to promote their rights and to restore childhood.

Bridge Course Centres were planned particularly for the school drop outs. The main objective of the bridge course centre is to encourage a child to continue education by creating a positive channel. These centres help children to continue their education in a regular school. Regular follow up is done by the appointed volunteers so that every child - upto 14 years – attends school.

The Bridge course center volunteers prepared 7 children in Andhra Pradesh and 5 in Tamil Nadu for appearing in 10th exam. Parents-teacher meetings were conducted where they were motivated to send their children to the bridge course centers regularly.

Women and girls were enriched in their skills and developed confidence for better self employment opportunities. Children were provided information on availing loans from the banks and other financial institutions to start their own business centers. By attending the courses at the vocational training centers, the employable skills, social status and confidence level has increased.

Child Labour Free Zone Project made people aware of the problems related to child labour and integrated livelihood issues. In order to achieve this, network and alliances were built with various organizations.

CHILD LABOUR FREE ZONES

A CASA initiative

Supplementary Educational Centres are giving additional coaching to the school going children. This has helped them to pass the relevant class and prevented them from dropping out. Homework and every day lessons are refreshed in our centres. It encourages children to study further without dropping out from school. As a result of the programme implementation, the school drop-outs have reduced in our project areas.

When at one hand a few school drop outs and child labours are identified by CASA and enrolled back to bridge courses or regular schools, not all children meet the same fate at the end of the tunnel.

Unfortunately, in spite of constant efforts by the government and civil societies, a large number of the children are still trapped in the cycle of poverty as they leave behind their childhood which deserves right to complete education, proper nutrition and healthcare.

With a majority of child labourers not able to pursue education, a few – however – dream of re-starting a more dignified life after having left one in the race for a stable financial life.

For those, CASA gives them an opportunity like vocational skill training centres and computer training centres Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The journey for a girl child labourer is even more painful. Being 'doubly marginalised', she starts working at a very young age, is married off even before she is an adult and delivers a child when she is an 'adolescent' - in most cases.

While some mothers are successful in keeping their child out of the bounds of poverty, other are not so "lucky".

13-year-old Mary started working in the chilly field and cotton field before coming to this CASA Skill Training Centre in Chithapur village of Chhatrai Mandal district in Andhra Pradesh.

In the summer season, she would go with her family to pluck and collect mangos to earn a daily wage of around Rs 120.

SKILL MATTERS

Formal education may either not be available or may be of such poor quality that children lack interest and drop out of school, with insufficient education depriving many young people in rural areas from acquiring basic skills. Focus on vocational training for adolescents and youths – who are in or vulnerable to child labour - will help them develop newer work skills and enhance employability with dignity.



(Left) Women enrolled in CASA Tailoring Course in Chhatrai Mandal (AP)

(Right) Women from the same CASA Skill Training Centre engaged in embroidery

Belonging to a landless agricultural labourer family, the daily wage for her parents proved to be insufficient to support their daily needs. Troubles started to bloom up when the family reeled under huge debt after her brother and sister's marriages. "My family is still trying to pay off the debt," she said.

It has been 4 months that she is coming to this centre to learn tailoring and embroidery. "I have a lot of faith in this art. I feel I can liberate myself from the exhaustive labour works in the fields by concentrating on this form of art," she says.

"I can stitch frocks, gowns, and blouse. One stitched blouse costs 50 Rs or more. 2-3 blouses per day will give me more than what I used to earn at the field," she smile when she answers.

For her, the more joyous part is not the income coming out of the profession, but the joy to "sit under shade, comfort" and practice her skill is what "calms her mind." Lack of employment opportunities and wage disparity holds them back. This leads to a situation where they have very little voice in the decision-making within their families or in community.

CASA believes in making women financially independent by imparting vocational training like embroidery, fabric painting and tailoring so that they can find jobs based on their skills and escape the cycle of poverty.

We organise training programmes for women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in our project areas where they are motivated to address the livelihood issues and find alternate income generating models.

Embroidery, tailoring and fabric painting have given a new lease of life to these girls and women, who want to develop entrepreneurial skills within 4 months. ■



Sukanya 15-year-old

Before coming to CASA tailoring centre, I used to go for work at a poultry farm-working day and night on very low wages due to

which I also dropped out of school. This centre has given me hope and an ambition to earn on my own terms and not out of compulsion. Tailoring has become my passion now.



Sarika 18-year-old

I used to work in cotton fields where I had gone through a lot of pressures-physical and mental. I am the eldest child in my family. I

could not continue my education due to financial burdens as I started working at an early age. This centre is a hope to me and many more girls like me.



CASA FOR

COMPUTER LITERACY FOR RURAL YOUTHS



With internet and mobile phones marking a new beginning in almost every aspect of life, most companies expect their employees to possess at least basic computer skills. The Government of India also launched a campaign Digital India to ensure that the government services are made available to citizens electronically by improved online infrastructure and by increasing Internet connectivity or by making the country digitally empowered in the field of technology.

There is a huge need for computer literates in the growing digital-based businesses all around the world.

CASA introduced Computer Training for the youths and school drop-outs, who have no or little access to computer and internet, so that they can also participate in the global digital learning. The youths experienced a change. The harsh hours of low-wage physical exhaustion was now transiting into a more comfortable education.

Basic computer applications like MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint are being taught to separate batches of girls and boys who have lost their childhood to child labour and want a new beginning with a new skill altogether.

One such beneficiary is 21-year-old Sathish who dropped out of school at 10th class and was unable to study further due to financial constraints.

Sathish has an elbow permanent injury from a truck offloading

incident. “The family conditions were pathetic. The situation was like: If we don’t work for the day, we won’t get that particular day’s food. I sometimes went to work without eating anything. I used to do for labour works like mason, canal building, off-loading from trucks from where I got this injury.”

“When I was in class 8, I started working to share my parents’ work load. I used to come home from school at 4 PM and immediately rushed for the poultry farm where I worked till 10.30 PM. The next day the routine would continue to be the same. I could not manage the stress, so I decided to quit my school,” he said.

It has been exactly 2 months when he joined the CASA training centre in Chindapeta village in Andhra.

“Now, at least after learning computer I can get a dignified job in some small shop where I can earn upto 1,000 per day. I can come home at night and look after my ailing mother who cannot work anymore. I will not have to carry the 60-70 kg fodder bags on my back again, no would not have cuts on my palm, I would not injure my body parts again, I would not be slapped or abused again,” he said.

Sathish along with 10 other classmates are being taught the basic computer hardware and software handling. These critical computer and Internet skills are valued in today’s academic and professional environments. Educators are pushing greater computer literacy requirements since student exposure does not necessarily translate to understanding.

Strengthening livelihood

Because children deserve education

Whenever a child is liberated from labour, his/her household encounters various economic problems and disturbances.

In order to fill this gap, Income Generation Programme (IGP) has been introduced to support and increase the family income partially through capital generation for small economic activities – micro enterprises.

As an impact, their financial conditions have shown an improvement which keeps a child safe in the ambit of education.

Twenty parents, whose children were working, were provided with goats in Tamil Nadu for the support of their livelihood and 50 parents in Andhra Pradesh were supported to start different trade like sheep rearing, goat rearing, vegetable vending, basket making, petty shops, brick making, and fishing net so that their children do not have to engage in labour activities.

Perspective and Capacity Building is a continuous process in project implementation. It is necessary to update the knowledge of every stakeholder for better understanding on children's education and Child Rights and implementation of programme to achieve the goal.

17 programmes have been conducted in which 667 leaders participated and capacitated in various programmes like Gender Mainstreaming, Children Rights, Group Dynamics and Financial Management, Medical and Health Camps, Cultural Training, Leadership Quality and PRI 73rd and 74th Amendment.

Child Labour Free Zone Project made people aware of the problems related to child labour and integrated livelihood issues. In order to achieve this, network and alliances were built at all levels.

Formation of groups and strengthening them is an important component of the programme for sustaining our efforts. The women, youth, children and adolescent groups meet regularly and discuss the course of action to be taken regarding the implementation.

Support and involvement of various groups and People's Organizations enhanced the unity among the community members as they realized the value of education, owned the learning process and encouraged children to continue studies or pursue skill training. Interest towards continuity of education has risen among the children and parents.

It has inspired the other school drop-outs and the community to enroll the children in the Bridge Course Centers. ■



The Restored



Writes Ishan Bharthi
CASA Communication Officer



“My father killed my mother when I was 3 days old. He abandoned me and married another woman, after that I was brought up by my aunt. My aunt could only afford to send me to school till standard seven after which I had to leave the school and started working as an agricultural labour on daily wage.

“I wanted to continue my studies and loved going to school but the family had no choice, since we were a family of eight people and there was not enough money to even have one meal a day, going to school was a luxury.” Shraddha (name changed) cries as she narrates her life and talks about her mother’s murder.

Lack of food and intensive labour has taken a toll on her health; there are marks of deep wound on her forearms, which she had got on the agricultural field. While sharing her suffering, she hides those wound marks with her dupatta.

“I became a bonded child labour at the age of 2 years. The landlord has given my mother a cell phone, which only had the incoming call facility. Daily he called up my mother at 4:30 in the morning, it was a wake-up morning call for me, as the work started at 5:00”. The first activity of the day was to clean the cow dung; there were around 25 to 27 cows.

“For an hour I used to clean the cowshed and around 6:00 am the landowner gave me a cup of tea. Post morning tea I was supposed to work

in the farms of my owner. The day ended by 7:00 in the evening. I used to get so tired from the work that at times I was not able to speak to my mother for continuous 2 – 3 days”.

Child labour and poverty are inevitably use the labour of children as the treatment have both poverty and child labour to the

Recollecting his bad memories his emotions turn from sombre to that into anger “I was a child and committed mistakes at times, the landlord and his brothers often abused, scolded and sometimes raised their hands on me but stopped just short of hitting me”. Punching his fist in the air he further says “I felt like beating them back but I was too small at that time”. Shubham (name changed) suddenly slips into silence with his head down while telling about his past.

This is the condition of most of the children in the Chatrai Mandal region in Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. The 2011 national census of India found the total number of child labour, aged 5–14, to be at 4.35 million and the total child population to be 259.64 million in that age group. (Source: censusindia.gov.in/2011census/population_enumeration.aspx).

The important characteristic of child labour in India is that about

Childhood

90 % of the working children are concentrated in the rural areas. They not only work in farm sector but also in various non-farm activities in rural areas. The same trend is reflected in Census as well

bound together and if you continue to of social disease of poverty, you will end of time: Grace Abbot

as NSSO data, but in the context of globalization, new forms of child labour are emerging in India.

Children working in cottonseed farms are one such case in point. It is found that labour employed on advanced capitalist cottonseed farms in Andhra Pradesh – which is linked to national and multinational capital – involves the employment of labour which is mostly female and young (7-14 years) (Source: Planning Commission report on child labour 2011 -2012).

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), there are tremendous economic benefits for developing nations by sending children to school instead of work. Without education, children do not gain the necessary skills such as literacy and technical aptitude that will increase their productivity to enable them to secure higher-skilled jobs in future with higher wages that will lift them out of poverty. (Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3451117.stm>).

CASA is helping these children to abandon child labour and come into the mainstream by initiating the Child Labour Free Zone project (CLFZ) in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Lives for these children have come to a full circle in the Chatrai Mandal region after CASA started CLFZ project.

Shraddha is now 15, Shubham 10 and Shiva 12 years of age. They are enrolled into the CASA Bridge Course Centre, which was started with the aim to bridge the gap between studies of these children.

The centre helps them to seek admission in regular government schools, so they can pursue senior secondary and further studies. Shraddha who dropped out of school in standard seven, plans to take up the standard 10th board exams through open schooling.

She is confident of passing her board exams by next year. She likes to study English and aims to become a Nurse in future. After experiencing the trauma in her life, Shraddha wants to help the community by taking care of their medical needs. Shubham and Shiva plan to take admission in regular government school by next year.

All these children have sparks in their eyes, strength in their voice and smiles on their faces while sharing their future plans. ■



Living on the Edge

Children of

Tea Gardens



Writes Deepak Singh
CASA Humanitarian and Policy Consultant



According to a survey conducted by the Regional Labour Office of North Bengal, a total 1, 86,559 families with a population of 11, 24,907 resides in 276 organized tea estates of North Bengal. This includes 40% population of children and old age persons. There are 2, 18,968 daily rated and 8,72,938 non-workers in the Tea Estates of Hill, Terai and Doors.

Mostly (90%) from the tribal communities, the tea workers were brought by the British as the local populations were then reluctant to join the plantations. This tribal population have been living in these gardens for generations, tracing their lineage to their forefathers from what are now Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and also Nepal.

Tea Estates are being regulated through Plantation Labour Act 1951. Though Act provides basic framework for the welfare and protection of the tea workers, there is no Labour welfare officer in 175 Tea Estates (RLO, 2012).

For past one and a half decade, closure of tea gardens, dispute between workers and the management, and complex political dynamics has produced extreme vulnerability, destitution, starvation, malnutrition, suicides, migration, trafficking and child

labour in the tea gardens. To deal with the situation, Labour Commissioner Office of North Bengal has been facilitating negotiations between workers and management without much progress. However, few tea gardens have re-opened with negligible work opportunities and inadequate wage payment. MGNREGs work has also been introduced in tea gardens under the supervision of Operating Management Committees (OMCs). But, late payment and mismanagement of OMCs discourage people to participate in it.

Consequently, inadequate income, uncertain work availability and absence of alternative livelihoods in the area have created a complete helplessness in workers' households.

Impact of such vulnerability has been seriously observed on children and elderly persons in terms of their survival, protection, participation and development.

Interaction with workers and children in Madhu, Kathgudi, Chamurchi and Torsa Tea Estates (TEs) provides quite a grim picture of the conditions in which workers are living in these TEs.

Realities

In Torsa TE, it was found that almost every house is damaged by



the wild elephants and children and elderly persons remain in these houses without any protection. It was reported that the workers neither got any assistance from the management nor any benefit from Indra Housing Scheme (IAY) to repair their houses. The housing conditions were the same in many TEs too as 37 TEs in the area did not spend a single penny during last four years.

With the help of Civil Society Organisations and after long struggle against corrupt dealers, local SHGs are running PDS shops in these TEs. Consequently, families were able to get subsidised rice and wheat for food. Children reported that they are having 3 meals a day. However, when their houses were visited, it was found that 3 time food means only boiled rice and salt with rarely available vegetable. This food intake comes under severely food insecure and emergency phase of CARI[1] or IPC indicators of World Food Programme and indicates huge economic vulnerability and asset depletion. However, it was encouraging to see on the spot that ICDS and Mid-day meal centres were

providing fresh cooked food to children even on school holidays, though the ICDS in-charge accepted that 95% pregnant women and children are anaemic and malnourished in TEs.

It was found that children are forced to go to home for water and toilet as no toilet and water facilities are available in Kathalgudi primary school. Water has been a big problem in the TE as old pipelines are defunct and there is no provision for maintenance. Consequently, children especially girls and boys spend maximum time in fetching water from far off places that affect their schooling. During rainy season it becomes extremely difficult as roads in some of the villages like Chamurchi were almost non-existent. Non availability of water in school has been affecting academic efficiency and interest of the children going to school. Children who go to nearby town for higher secondary schooling, feel distressed as they find it very difficult to meet the cost of daily transportation. Consequently, many young boys and girls have been reported to discontinue their education.

Adolescent girls in Madhu & Torsa TEs explained awful sanitary conditions of the toilet in their school as it is cleaned fortnightly. 'On the one side, girls get inadequate and innutritious food, on the other such sanitary condition is enough to make us ill', said Debotry Cheekbadai, an 11 years old girl from Madhu TE. Due to closure of TEs, neither management nor OMCs are concerned about the basic facilities in the schools.

A number of cases were reported from every TE on migration of teen-age boys and girls, due to distress household conditions, to support their families. Most of them are believed to be in Tamil Nadu, Kashmir, Haryana and Sikkim without any contact detail. Parents of these children are illiterate and have no idea of the outer world therefore struggle to approach government institutions to seek help.

Further, most of the children were staying with their grandparents as their parents are either passed away or they have abandoned them for another marriage. The grandparents find it difficult to travel and find their children.

Amidst gloomy situation, few encouraging initiatives were also observed. As a result of visit of the West Bengal State Advisor to Supreme Court Food Commissioner with civil society to closed tea estates and subsequent meetings with higher authorities of WB government in Kolkata, a mid-day meal scheme called 'Sahay' has been launched to tackle starvation and hunger situation in tea gardens.

The scheme provides free meals to destitute old-age persons as well as those who don't have any source of income. Local SHGs execute the scheme and gets Rs. 20 per meal for providing fresh mid-day meal to selected persons in tea gardens. However, it has been considered just an emergency response rather a permanent solution as beneficiaries fear that it will change with the change of government in the state.

CASA and its partners 'Rural Aid' and 'JCDHI' are working in the area since 2003 to support children, women, and old age persons by engaging them in timely delivery and monitoring of ICDS, MDM, PDS and now Sahay scheme. Local SHGs have been mobilized for the effective distribution of food from these schemes. Asha workers have been motivated to visit each household and prepare health chart of the pregnant women, and arrange ambulance for delivery. Consequently, 100% cases of child delivery take place in government hospitals, family of the child doesn't have to pay for the transport cost and mother gets Rs. 1000 for her immediate nutrition needs.

Further, Rural Aid and JCDHI have ensured that each village has a children group that meets frequently, arrange social and

sporting events, and help each other in distress. It was moving to know from the children (shown in picture below) that 90% of them are child labour and work in a stone-quarry @ Rs. 40 for a block of stone. They have to find a stone from the river, shape it in a block and give it to the contractor. The whole process takes 1-2 days for one block. However, they feel happy as it supports their family and provide some income for their education.

Through these clubs, children are able to understand trafficking in the area. Debotry, age 11, explained that 'if someone asks us to go with him/her for good job we immediately inform our parents and other relatives...take the address and phone number of the person for police verification....keep the photo id of the person.'

Conditions in the TEs are dreadful as workers lives in extreme anxiety for regular work and timely payment of wages in tea gardens. As TEs occupy 80% land under legal protection, there is no possibility for alternative agriculture activities in the area. Workers are trained and skilled to work in tea gardens only therefore, unable to find work in other industries except as daily wage workers in construction industry in other states or bordering country. Lack of income and distress situation in family creates psycho-social impact on children, and absence of parents create extra burden on destitute old aged persons for child care. The Panchayat system is completely dysfunctional and Gram Sansad /Sabha have never taken place in the area. Consequently, selection of beneficiaries for BPL card, PDS card, Indira Awas Yojna,

Pension schemes, MGNREGs work and unemployment allowance are unknown, monitoring through school, health, forest and land sub-committees are completely missing, and no village plan has ever been prepared by the people to solve housing, water, sanitation and roads problems in the village.

It is high time to prioritize development of men, women, children and destitute old age persons living in the TEs. It is imperative to restore dignity and identity of this population as 'Tea workers' through the strict enforcement of Plantation Act and all subsequent agreements between government and the management of TEs for workers' welfare. Since 90% of the population in TEs belong to tribal communities, more active role of WB Tribal Development Corporation and budget under tribal sub-plan is required to be spent with firm monitoring to restore 'Tribal Asmita'. In this regard, there is an urgent need to review land policy of the state in this area from tribal perspective for their permanent livelihood solution through land distribution. Finally, in current situation, child and old-age care cannot be seen in isolation by ignoring other critical facets, therefore, role of Panchayat Raj especially Gram Sabha/Sansad is extremely critical to implement and monitor government welfare programmes related to education, food, water, health, sanitation, road, employment, pension, and housing. Civil society in the area must focus on this aspect and help people and local institutions in strengthening of local self-governance in the area. ■



An abandoned tea factory of Madhu Tea Estate in Alipurduar district, West Bengal

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan's Barmer is one of the largest and the most backward districts of the state. For the local population comprising mostly of schedule castes, scheduled tribes and refugees of the Indo-Pak wars, life is a struggle.

With no industries around, the only source of income seems to be agriculture and animal husbandry, the traditional craft of patchwork and mirror embroidery, practiced by the women of the area.

Educational scenario is not very encouraging in the district. Barmer is one of the most educationally backward districts in the country with total literacy rate of 22.98 percent. Lack of schools, lack of awareness and traditional practices are the main reasons for low literacy rate of women. Children are not taken to the health centers for general health check-ups in majority of cases. In fact villagers even do not know that they should take their new-borns to the hospitals for general check-ups.

Kharadi is one of the remote villages in Barmer District where few years ago Anganwadi programme was not very popular among the villagers. They were not interested in sending their children to centre because they did not find the centers useful. In Kharadi Village there was only one Anganwadi Center which was not in a good position. There were no regular staffs from last two years. Children below 6 years used to roam around and were suffering from malnutrition which causes high IMR.

Due to the continuous efforts by Samudaik Pairwi Manch (People's Organization), staff were appointed in that Anganwadi, but the situation remain the same because there were no proper timings for opening and closing of the center, which was dependent on the convenience of the Anganwadi Workers. Supply of supplementary meals to the children was not regular. Only 10 children were registered in that Anganwadi though there was more number of children in that village.

Meanwhile, village meetings are being organized and a monitoring committee of villagers has been formed who are responsible for the proper functioning of the Anganwadi. With the help of Gram Panchayat, wall painting of the Anganwadi was done where all the necessary information were written and a proper time table was made for opening, closing, time of food distribution, days of immunization etc. Both

As a result, 40 children have started going to the Angawadi and are regularly getting nutritious foods along with basic education. 10 pregnant women and 12 lactating mothers were given medical and nutrition assistance.

Immunization also became a regular affair. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) are slowing gradual reduction. Similarly, dropout rate among the school going children have reduced in the village.



UTTAR PRADESH

- **Children in Age Group 0-6 years: 30, 791, 331**
- **Literacy Level in UP: 67.68%**
Out of which
- **Male literacy: 77.28%**
- **Female literacy: 57.18%**

Malnutrition among women and children remain high in Uttar Pradesh in spite of several thousand crores spent annually by state government on supplementary nutrition programmes. As per the records kept by the Union ministry of women and child development, UP is among the worst performing states in the area of underweight and malnutrition among children between the age group of 0 to 6 years.

According to the state's own records, 35.5% of the total children who were identified as beneficiaries of the supplementary

nutrition programme under ICDS were underweight, with 62,728 falling in the Grade III and IV - severely malnourished categories. The UP figures are also considerably higher than the national average of 28.4%.

The reason for drop out in primary/elementary schools is the unavailability of basic facilities such as separate toilets for boys and girls, inferior educational quality and unavailability of food etc. Hence, in order to increase the enrolment in school Mid Day Meal (MDM) was launched.

The main objective of MDM was to provide quality food during lunch and decrease the dropout rate and improve the health status of the children. In Uttar Pradesh, MDM was not implemented properly in many regions, mostly in the rural areas. Hence, CASA made an intervention in this area with the objective of creating an awareness among the marginalized communities and enrolment of the drop out children in the primary and junior high schools along with bringing an reduction in the IMR and MMR.

As a result, 4,213 children were enrolled in the primary/elementary school where the focus was mainly on the children of marginalized communities and our efforts are in continuous process for increased enrollment in school. School Management Committee (SMC) is the committee who manages the issues. The members of SMC consist of ANM, teachers, old students, principals and other selected community members.

Monthly meetings are held where the focus was made on the issues such as maintenance of the basic amenities of the schools, quality and quantity of food provided in the MDM and increase in the enrolment of the children. 431 schools were monitored on MDM and initial improvement was observed in all 431 schools as a result of interventions made by CASA.

2,759 children were linked with the anganwadi centre through the efforts made by the community leaders after being facilitated by CASA. CASA planned and implemented strategies wherein monitoring was done in 340 anganwadi centers. As a result of our efforts, 143 Anganwadi centers showed an improvement as they started to operate regularly, with the beneficiaries being provided with right quality and quantity of nutritional supplements. ■

Inputs by
CASA East Zone Team
Kamal Kumar
Dinesh Vyas



BIHAR

Bihar Commission for Protection of Child Rights (BSCPCR) was set up in September 2010 as a statutory body under Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005 (4 of 2006) to protect, promote and defend child rights in the state. The status of child rights in Jamui district came out to be very poor in every parameter like child labour, child marriage, children dropout from school, child malnutrition etc.

CASA organises rallies and campaigns to sensitize people about issues related to children and their overall development. Through this the people collectively try to present their problems in front of the state government and other stakeholders.

Various programs are being conducted like children seminar week, child rights rally, painting competition, Bache Chale Vidalay Ki Aur Abhiyaan etc. Issues like child labour, child safety, child malnutrition,

child marriage, lack of toilets in school, insufficient number of teachers and school dropout are discussed in the meetings.

In the week-long celebration of the Children Seminar around 750 students, teachers, government officials, local representatives and CBO members participated. District child project officer gave assurance to address their problems and spoke about the children rights given in the constitution.

Government has taken a number of steps with need active participation of the public and civil societies in order to eradicate the issues from its core.

Samgra Sewa, one of the PIOs under CASA CFC Bihar Package programme, working in Jamui district celebrated Child Rights week from 14th November 2016 to 20th November 2016 at Indpay and Amari Panchayat of Jamui. ■



(Left) Edda Kirleis from Bread for the World, Jack Amick from UMCOR and CASA Project Officer Anita Kukreti being received by the community members at CASA's Child Labour Free Zone project in Andhra Pradesh.



(Right) Jack Amick, Gordon Zook from MCCI, Edda Kirleis, Anita Kukreti, CASA Project Officer Jonathan Rout and CASA Head of Program Dr. Jayant Kumar with CASA Assistant Project Officer Karunagar Durai interacting with the children of Bridge Course Centre (BCC) - an initiative by CASA to enroll school dropouts.



Participants of LCP Coordination Committee Meeting, held on 3rd and 4th December 2016 in Bangkok





CASA had put up an information stall at an event held in Mumbai's Girgaon Chowpathy where hundreds of visitors reached to the organisation to know about its work and way forward.

The festival 'Prabhu Yesu Janmotsav' was started in 1965 by the then Lady Governor of Maharashtra, and is one of its kind in the whole country. The event is held every 2nd Sunday of December.

An exposure visit for farmers from five villages of Gujarat (Kaltar, Pachumber, Dabaka, Mathwali and Nani singloti) was organized on 25th October 2016 by CASA under FSCM program.

The main motive was to get knowledge about organic farming, crop and water management, scope and need for bio fertilizers, process to make these fertilizes, understanding the importance of other waste product of animals and vermin compost.

The farmers could understand the benefits of Gomutra (Cow Urine) and its demand in the market for making ayurvedic medicine and its use as an effective pesticide that can be utilized as pest control.

The farmers realized that this was an effective method to tackle climate change and prevent deforestation by using Bio gas and solar energy as a better source of energy.



Farmers and community leaders Understanding the importance of organic fertilisers by using cow urine, cow dung and cattle management as supplementary source of income.

Inputs by
CASA West Zone Team
Kantilal F. Patole



Bio gas plant



Neem leaves as source of income



Vegetable plantation better source of agriculture

Take-aways from the visit

- Importance of cow rearing use of Cow urine, cow dung, can be a source of good income. Good opportunity for collective initiative
- Bio Gas plant can be created near the house or in village as community for stratifying energy need like electricity and cooking
- Agriculture, forest and other product can be process for generating employment as well as income for individual or large group
- The realization and need of organic farming, not just focusing on chemical free farming, but also on bringing down expenses of farming, and assuring better financial returns
- Thinking and acting towards the green energy by utilization of solar energy.

A few children in a distant village of Madhya Pradesh are trying to address the rain-fed agricultural problems through organic farming.

15-year-old Anil Singh Teeka shows CASA Team how to make vermi-compost out of cow dung, cow urine, vegetable skins and earthworms.

“You add dry leaves, organic wastes like fruit and vegetable peels and leftovers, cow dung, collect cow urine and keep adding everyday to the matter, and do not forget to put a shade over the pit as earthworms will not function properly when exposed to direct sunlight,” Anil explains the vermin-compost process.

Very craftfully, Anil measures the adequate amount of compost and mixes it with a dark muddy matter in a pit. “It is a natural compost which adds minerals to the soil. The earthworms turn the waste into natural urea. We then filter the earthworms from the compost and use the same organisms in another pit.”

“I want to learn more and apply the same to my farm, tell my father that he does not have to struggle so hard. My father does not know the techniques; we have been only been using traditional farming methods. Now the pesticides have come in the market, and my father keeps coughing due to the fumes generate from the insecticides,” he says.





Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented his fourth Union Budget on February 1, 2017 in Parliament. Some of the major announcements made by Jaitley were dispensing of Kisan Vikas Patra along with National Savings Certificate with insurance cover for the rural population, setting up of Mahila Shakti Kendras at village level with an allocation of Rs 500 crore in 14 lakh ICDS anganwadi centres and stepping up allocation for the welfare of women and children under various schemes across ministries to Rs 1,84,633 crore in 2017-18, among others sleuths of measures.

Some of the major announcements made by Jaitley were dispensing of Kisan Vikas Patra along with National Savings Certificate with insurance cover for the rural population, setting up of Mahila Shakti Kendras at village level with an allocation of Rs 500 crore in 14 lakh ICDS anganwadi centres and stepping up allocation for the welfare of women and children under various schemes across ministries to Rs 1,84,633 crore in 2017-18, among others sleuths of measures.

Donald Trump took oath of office as the President of the United States on January 20th, 2017. The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States marked commencement of the four-year term of Donald Trump as President and Mike Pence as Vice President. An estimated 160,000 people attended the public ceremony held on Friday, January 20, 2017 on the West Front of the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

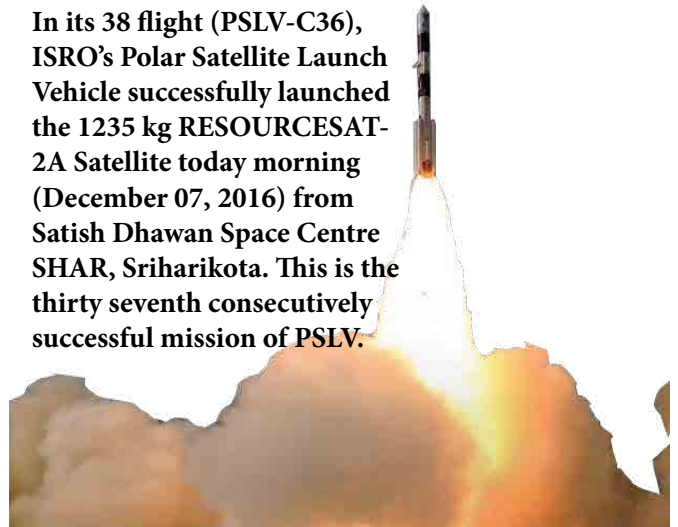


Mahendra Singh Dhoni

stepped down as captain of the Indian team from the One-Day Internationals and the T20 Internationals formats of the game on January 4, 2017 – a few days before the three-match ODI series against England.



In its 38 flight (PSLV-C36), ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched the 1235 kg RESOURCESAT-2A Satellite today morning (December 07, 2016) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota. This is the thirty seventh consecutively successful mission of PSLV.

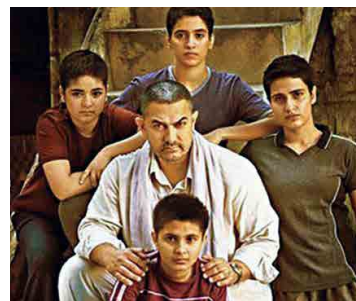


Cyclone Vardah

made its landfall in southern India in December last year bringing heavy rain to the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu as well as Andhra Pradesh.



J. Jayalithaa died of cardiac arrest on December 5, 2016 after being hospitalized since 22 September. She was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.



Bollywood movie on India's wrestling sport 'Dangal' has surpassed Baahubali's lifetime record in 17 days and now is set to become India's highest grossing film worldwide.

Sahaj International opens in Kochi in the South Indian state of Kerala in December last year. The country's first school for transgender pupils, it caters for adults who left school early.

Hollywood movie 'La La Land' earned 14 Oscar nominations - that means 'La La Land' has equalled the record held by 'Titanic' and 'All About Eve' as having the most Oscar nominations of all time.



CASA in Action

NEWSLETTER

**NOW READ THE MAGAZINE
ON YOUR DEVICE**



<http://casa-india.org/casa-newsletters>



DON'T LET HER BECOME



STOP PROMOTING CHILD LABOUR SUPPORT SCHOOLING FOR DROPOUTS



**SEND
CHILDREN
TO
SCHOOL**

Log on to <http://casa-india.org/donate> to know more